

You Don't Have to Love Me Back by [wolfish_willow](#)

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Summary:

Warm and relaxed, Steve drunkenly confesses his feelings for Nancy and Jonathan.

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Author's Note:

Written for Stoncy Week 2021

Day 6: Drunkenly Confessing Feelings

Not beta'd. Feel free to point out any typos I missed!

That last beer is a mistake. The heat from the alcohol and the crackling fire burning in the fireplace has got Steve feeling loose; relaxed in a way he isn't used to. The longer he sits on the couch, the further he falls into it. Nearly *off* of it before Jonathan, laughing—his laugh is *so*—grabs his shoulders and keeps him from sliding right onto the floor in a puddle.

"You okay there?" Jonathan asks. He hasn't let go of Steve's arms. Lips stretching in a slow, wide grin, Steve shakes his head.

"M'great," he says, lifting one of his arms to pat Jonathan on the chest. It doesn't go quite as well as he means it to. Jonathan only laughs again, taking Steve's hand and placing it back on the couch beside him. Steve swallows as he realizes just how close Jonathan is, leaning over him like this. Just as he's opening his mouth to say so, Jonathan lets him go.

It's not so bad, though, because now Steve can see Nancy. She's nursing her own beer—he thinks it's still only her second one—and bobbing her head to the music playing. It's not Jonathan's favorite, not even close, but he let them outvote him. And he's still smiling when he reaches Nancy, wrapping his arms around her waist and resting his head against hers. They sway with the music and the movement is hypnotizing to Steve, who can't look away.

Not that he ever has the desire to look away when he could be watching them instead.

There's an ache, a pressure building in his chest, as he watches the way they move with each other. It's hard to remember why he should

shove it back down; keep this to himself. He's so comfortable, so warm and loose and it's too hard to imagine that he could feel anything *but*.

"I love you."

They stop swaying, but Steve doesn't mind because they turn to face him instead. The world is a little fuzzy around the edges—it didn't ever used to get that way when he drank, but ever since... well it does now—and they're far enough away, all the way across the *room* that it's hard to make out their expressions clearly. He thinks Nancy looks nervous; definitely sees her glance from Steve to Jonathan and back again.

"No," Steve says, shaking his head. Clarifies with a smile, "Not just—I love *both*'ve you. So much."

They're quiet for a minute. Some of the buzz of the alcohol starts to fade, but he's still comfortable. Confident. He isn't used to feeling like that; even back in school when he'd tried his best to *look* that way, he had never really *felt* it. It's only gotten worse since then. Harder to be anything other than scared, but he doesn't feel scared now. Not even when he blinks and his vision clears enough to really see them.

"S'ok, you don't," he tells them, pushing himself up and putting his elbow on the arm rest. He leans his cheek against his fist and smiles. "You don't feel the same way 'n that's fine. I just...You're both so—I wanted to tell you, s'all."

They share another look. Nancy bites her lip and it's just as distracting now as it always is, but he still catches Jonathan raising his eyebrows in response. A whole conversation without having to say a word. Steve wonders what that's like; doesn't think he's ever been able to do that with anyone.

Would like to learn to do it with them, but he understands that won't happen. He really doesn't mind; it's not so bad being in love with people who are in love with each other. Steve doesn't have to be included to enjoy getting to see them happy. It took him some time to get to that point, but not as long as he'd expected. It's hard to be upset when he sees the way they both make each other smile.

Nancy looks at him with her lips pressed together. The movement of her throat as she swallows is almost as distracting as watching her bite her lip.

"You're really drunk." Fair. Steve is at least eighty percent sure that's why he said anything at all. Doesn't mean he isn't telling the truth, which is what he opens his mouth to say before Nancy continues. "It's not that we don't"—she gestures between herself and Jonathan—"but we should probably talk about this when you're—when we're all...sober."

"It's really okay," Steve insists because it *is*. He understands that it couldn't work out between him and Nancy. Understands that it's *weird* to love two people at the same time. No one does that. It's not really normal, which has always been what Steve tries to be. But Steve *does* love them. Can't help it; has stopped trying to make it go away and just let himself enjoy getting to be their friend now.

And it's not that he thinks they don't *care* about him; he wouldn't be here now, celebrating with them, if that were the case. He's just happy and couldn't keep it to himself anymore. They don't have to love him back for him to be content.

Nancy tilts her head to look up at Jonathan. He glances down at her with a shrug. His hand looks so big where it's rubbing up and down her arm. Steve is so focused on that, caught up in thoughts he tries not to let himself think most of the time, that he doesn't notice right away that they're getting closer. It's almost like he blinks and suddenly they're right in front of him. They were just on the other side of the room; how did they move so fast?

"Hi," he says and it comes out almost like a question. Blinking like it might help him make sense of anything, Steve drops his arm and straightens back up. It takes some effort; his body is still loose and he's starting to feel sleepy as the heat from the room continues to seep into him.

Jonathan leans down, reaching out and Steve lifts his hand without thought. Swallows hard when Jonathan's fingers close around it. The room feels warmer—*Steve* feels warmer in a way that he's sure has nothing to do with the fireplace.

"We're definitely talking about this again tomorrow," Jonathan says, giving Steve's hand a quick squeeze. His heart leaps into his throat; Steve thinks the only other time they've held hands was back when he was seventeen and Jonathan was pulling him away from a monster. When Steve can tear his eyes away from them, he sees a half smile on Jonathan's face. "When you aren't so tired that you look like you're going to pass out right here. But, uh"—he licks his lips, eyes darting to Nancy and back again—"you're not...we *do* feel the same way."

Steve's jaw drops. His eyes get wide, he can feel it; knows he must look ridiculous, but he can't help it. He looks between them and his lips begin to curve up when Nancy catches his eye and nods. It should be hard to believe, he thinks. Is pretty sure if he hadn't had that last beer, he would shake his head and insist it couldn't be true. Instead, he can't do anything but smile so hard his cheeks ache with it. Squeeze Jonathan's hand as tight as he can when his limbs don't feel completely in his control.

"That's...that's awesome."

Both of them laugh and Steve does, too. Laughs so hard he falls back against the couch, unable to hold himself up anymore. Jonathan lets go of his hand, but it's only to help straighten him back up, like he'd done what must have been only a few minutes ago. "It is, isn't it?"

"So much," Steve says, still smiling. His eyelids are getting heavy. He forces his eyes wide to try and keep them open longer, but it isn't long before they fall closed again. As tired as he is, he doesn't want to fall asleep. Not yet.

How can he sleep now that he knows that Nancy and Jonathan love him back?

"Here," Nancy says, her voice low. He doesn't realize his eyes are closed again until he feels her hand press against his arm. She pushes him gently and he does his best to move away from the armrest when she tells him to scoot over. His eyes shut as she takes that space for herself. She leans into his side, lifting his arm to wrap around her. It doesn't take any effort at all to pull her close. "This way we'll be able to talk about it when we all wake up."

Steve hums, smiling when he feels the cushions dip on his other side. Jonathan is slower, more hesitant maybe to move close to Steve. That's no good; he's way too far away. Steve lifts his other arm to pull Jonathan close, too. There's a surprised huff of laughter, but no resistance. Gentle pressure on top of his stomach—Nancy and Jonathan's hands, he's sure—has him sighing. The last of his resolve to stay awake fades away as he feels a head fall on each of his shoulders. Hears both of them breathing, feels them pressed closer than he'd ever imagined he would.

Suddenly, he can't wait for tomorrow morning.

Author's Note:

Comments are love <3